

## COVID-19 Q&A for Parents/Caregivers

### **Why did the health district put my school into the risk tier it is currently in?**

SCPHD does not issue risk assessments specific to schools. The regional risk plan assigns a county a risk level based on hospital impact, daily average case rate, positivity rate, and other epidemiological factors. The school district, and all local businesses, is encouraged to change their internal risk level to match SCPHD assessment, but is not forced to do so. Learn more about the Regional Risk Level plan and the County assessments at <https://www.phd5.idaho.gov/Coronavirus/>.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms include fever, sore throat, cough, diarrhea, severe headache, nausea or vomiting, body aches, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, chills.

### **How can I reduce my child's risk of getting COVID-19?**

Since the virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person, the following measures can help reduce your child's risk of exposure: washing their hands often with soap and warm water, avoiding close contact with people who are sick, staying at least six feet from other people, wearing a mask when out in public, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.

### **When should I have my child tested?**

If your child has experienced any of the above symptoms or has been in close contact with someone who has recently tested positive, keep your child home and call your healthcare provider for a medical evaluation. You cannot test early to get out of quarantine because it can take a full 14 days for the virus to grow within the body enough to show up on a test.

### **Where can I go to get my child tested?**

Discuss with your child's healthcare provider or visit <https://www.get-tested-covid19.org>

### **What should I do if my child tests positive?**

If your child tests positive, they will need to stay home from school and remain isolated from others until the child's health care provider, health district, and school determines it's okay to return. In most cases, children with a positive test can return when they have been fever-free for 24 hours, their other symptoms have improved, and it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms started or they tested positive.

### **What happens if my child becomes sick in school?**

If your child becomes sick in school, you will be notified to pick them up as soon as possible. The School will contact you to discuss next steps (including consulting with healthcare provider and possible testing).

### **How will I be notified if my child was exposed at school?**

If another child, staff, or teacher tests positive in the school, the school district has an internal plan to determine close contacts (within 3-6 feet for 15 minutes or more). If your child was determined to be in close contact, you will be notified and asked to keep your child home for 14 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive. The health district has given your school guidance for determining who was a close contact, but the school makes the final determination. If you have any questions about that process please contact your school or school district. The health district will do all contact tracing outside of the school, including friends and family of the person who tested positive.

### **What should I do if my child was exposed outside of school?**

If your child has been in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with someone outside of the school setting who has recently tested positive, call your school's COVID-19 POC\* to discuss next steps (including consulting with healthcare provider and possible testing). Your child will need to stay home for 14 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive.

**When can my child go back to school?**

If your child tested positive for COVID-19 they will typically be allowed to return when they have been fever-free for 24 hours, their other symptoms have improved, and it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms started or they tested positive.

If your child is considered a close contact of someone who tested positive they need to stay home for a full 14 days after their exposure, even if they test negative. This is because the virus can take up to 14 days to spread throughout the system and show up on a test. Unfortunately, your child may still be infectious even before they test positive so they need to stay away from people for the full 14 days. If your child shows symptoms within that time it's a good idea to get them tested so you can work through the isolation period if they test positive.

Masks are helpful, but not 100 percent effective. This means they may protect your child, but they will still need to stay home if they are identified as a close contact.

**A family member tested positive/was exposed to COVID-19, do my kids need to stay home from school?**

If anyone in your family has spent 15 or more minutes within six feet of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 they are considered a close contact and need to quarantine for 14 days. If they spent 15 minutes within six feet of someone who is a close contact they do not need to quarantine, but should keep a close eye on their symptoms and call their healthcare provider right away if they show signs of the disease.

**Other specific questions about school policy, school decisions, efforts made in school to protect children, contact tracing decisions within the school, etc.**

Please contact your school or school district for the answer to these questions. SCPHD does not have any authority to make a school comply with public health guidelines or set rules or protocol for a school. Each school district has a slightly different plan for their response to COVID-19 that should be available on their website or by request.

**Additional Resources**

South Central Public Health District website: <https://www.phd5.idaho.gov/Coronavirus/>

Idaho Back to School Framework:

<https://www.sde.idaho.gov/re-opening/files/Idaho-Back-to-School-Framework-2020.pdf>

CDC Back to School Planning: Checklists to Guide Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/parent-checklist.html>

\*Each school district and charter school has an identified point of contact (POC) that communicates and collaborates with local public health officials